

we thank her, and we wish her much success and happiness in all of her future endeavors.

ARE WE BETTER OFF NOW?

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I often ask the question, Are we better off than we were? And I think that that question needs to be posed today and for the next few months with regard to the Bush administration and the Republican majority here in the Congress.

If we think about 4 years ago, we were in a surplus situation. Now we have a huge deficit. If we think about 4 years ago, we were basically at peace. Now in the midst of a war, a war which I think most people realize was essentially fought for the wrong reasons and which is costing us a tremendous amount of resources as well as costing us lives and wounded soldiers. And if we also think about 4 years ago, the economy was doing very well. Jobs were being created. Four years later under the Bush administration and the Republican majority, we have a situation where something like 2.5 million jobs have been lost and many Americans are having a hard time making ends meet.

So when the Republicans say to us, or anybody says to us, Are we better off than we were 4 years ago under this administration, the answer is clearly, no.

REPORT ILLEGAL ALIENS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last year illegal aliens cost taxpayers more than \$1 billion in hospital costs.

I support H.R. 3722, introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHR-ABACHER), which requires hospitals to report the immigration status of the individuals they treat. This bill also makes employers responsible for these medical costs if they employ the illegal alien.

Hospitals already collect information from patients. Reporting immigration status as a condition for receiving Federal funds is not overly burdensome.

We cannot afford to ignore the growing costs associated with illegal immigration. In my home State of Texas, health care for illegal immigrants costs taxpayers at least \$170 million every year.

If we are serious about reducing illegal immigration, we need to support this legislation.

QUESTIONING THE HOUSE SCHEDULE

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, this is, since April 1, the 16th day the House has been in session. And here is a sample of what we have done: we have named 11 post offices, recognized the Garden Club of America, recognized the importance of music education in America, and authorized the use of the Capitol grounds for the Soap Box Derby.

What has happened to our troops in Iraq in that time? We lost 184 Americans, our loved ones, bringing the total to 785. As we name post offices, our constituents are asking questions of the whys and hows of Iraq and want us to get the answers.

This week how are we handling the controversies in Iraq? We are going to name three more post offices; authorize the use of the Capitol grounds, appropriately, for the World War II memorial services; and consider the Paperwork Reduction Act. Then we are going on recess.

This House has surrendered its oversight role, which is constitutionally enacted and guaranteed, by rubber-stamping the policy in Iraq without asking the questions our constituents are asking and not seeking the answers they need.

As President Kennedy once said, "To govern is to choose." We need to make choices here.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN IRAQ

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, for months we have heard opponents of the war in Iraq come to the floor of this Congress and ask the question again and again, where are the weapons of mass destruction?

And yesterday the answer came in part, and the silence on the left is deafening. Yesterday the Coalition Provisional Authority announced the discovery of two separate Iraqi munitions wired by terrorists to serve as IEDs in Baghdad which date to the regime of Saddam Hussein and contain weapons of mass destruction, sarin and mustard gas.

Where are the weapons of mass destruction? Mr. Speaker, the answer is becoming more clear by the hour. The weapons of mass destruction are where they have always been, hidden in Baghdad, within the reach of terrorists, a threat to U.S. troops, the region, and the wider world, and more than enough justification for our deeds and the courage of our troops in that region.

THE BUDGET DEFICIT AND THE NEXT ELECTION

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, my remarks are 1 minute long. During this

minute, the economic policies put into place by the President and Republican leaders will force America to spend almost \$1 million more than it takes in. That is right. We are free-spending \$1 million a minute we do not have.

This President has created the worst budget deficit in history and the worst economic climate since the Depression. The administration keeps rewarding its friends with seven-figure incomes. They are doing it by mortgaging America's future.

There is a payment coming due this November, and America has saved up. It is called an election. Soon a new President and Democratic leadership will restore fiscal sanity to this house of cards. It is not soon enough to send George Bush back to Crawford, Texas.

IN SUPPORT OF MAJOR MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORM

(Mr. BURGESS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, this week is a good week. The American College of Surgeons is in town visiting us in our offices on Capitol Hill, and so it is of some note that we passed again a measure for liability reform last week in this House. We did that a year ago and unfortunately got stalled over somewhere by the rotunda. I hope this year it can indeed go forward because, Mr. Speaker, it is so important for people to realize and for my friends at the American College of Surgeons to realize that right now we have got a President who will sign major medical liability reform. We have a candidate running for that office who has either voted "no" or been absent when that vote has been taken in the other body.

We can no longer afford the crippling costs of defensive medicine that are layered upon our existing health care system. Mr. Speaker, it is time for Americans to sit up and take notice of this problem. Our professional people and our patients are indeed in peril.

SENIORS WILL NOT BE SCARED BY PARTISAN RHETORIC

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, after years of rhetoric and empty promises on improving health care, on June 1 seniors will finally be able to save money on their prescription drugs by choosing a drug discount card that best suits them. This is only possible because the Republican Congress and President Bush passed bipartisan legislation that modernizes Medicare and provided a real prescription drug benefit that means immediate savings for seniors across the Nation.

While some Members are engaging in partisan scare tactics in an election year, they cannot stop seniors from